

Boston College

General further education college

Inspection dates		28 January–1 February 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Adult learners' outcomes are below average when compared with similar colleges nationally.
- Apprenticeship achievement rates have declined and are below the national average on engineering, construction, hairdressing, business and customer services frameworks.
- Higher proportions than average fail to complete, pass and achieve high grades in AS and A-level subjects.
- The proportion of good or better lessons is not high enough across all subject areas and as a result too many learners do not achieve their potential.
- Support for learners from the UK and from Eastern Europe to develop their skills in English is not as effective as it could be in all lessons.
- Managers' assessment of the quality of teaching and learning is overgenerous and not yet reliable.
- Management actions to raise standards have not yet had sufficient impact in securing consistently good teaching and learning or in addressing the areas of underperformance.

This provider has the following strengths:

- The impact of the Principal in developing a more challenging and self-critical culture.
- A friendly and welcoming environment for learners of all ages and from all backgrounds.
- How well learners' social skills are developed, so that learners work together confidently in lessons and act courteously around the college.
- Good outcomes for learners aged 16 to 18 on foundation and intermediate level courses.
- High pass rates for part-time learners aged 14 to 16 who attend vocational courses.
- Supportive staff who know their learners' abilities and needs well.
- Good quality and effective support for learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- A culture where learners' views are listened to and acted upon where possible.
- An increasing range of higher education courses for learners to progress to.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Provide more training and support to ensure that observers evaluate the quality of lessons more accurately and, as a priority, ensure the focus of lesson observations is on the quality of learning and the progress learners make.
- Develop the performance review process so that the outcomes contain rigorous and detailed evaluations of the skills or competencies of teachers and managers in order to accelerate improvements in teaching and learning and learners' outcomes.
- Ensure that teaching staff make use of high quality staff development, including the sharing of the good practice that exists in the college, to enable them to improve, and monitor its impact rigorously.
- Ensure that activities and assessments within lessons challenge the most able learners effectively.
- Provide learners with challenging goals to achieve and personalised targets so they know what they need to do to improve.
- Develop learners' spelling, grammar, language and numeracy skills routinely in lessons.
- Promote learners' awareness and understanding of other cultures and diversity more consistently during lessons and assessments.
- Ensure that entry requirements are at an appropriate level and that learners are prepared well for the demands of advanced-level courses, especially at AS-level, so that learners are more able to meet the challenges of these courses.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Adults' success rates have declined since the last inspection and are below average. This is largely because high proportions of learners do not complete information technology, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and access to nursing courses. Actions to improve monitoring arrangements and change structures on these courses are in place. College data indicate an improved picture of in-year retention at the time of inspection, but it is too early to measure the full impact on learners' outcomes.
- Learners aged 16 to 18 make progress in line with their starting points on most advanced level courses, but progress is below average on A levels in world development, history, religious studies, law and English, and on vocational diplomas in business, information technology, media studies, sports and health and social care.
- The achievements of learners aged 16 to 18 on intermediate and foundation courses have improved and are above average. On advanced-level courses there has been little improvement as a result of below average retention and low success rates on AS courses. For learners aged 14 to 16 who attend vocational courses, part-time from local schools, pass rates are high.
- On work-place learning courses, offered mainly in health and social care, construction and skills for life, achievements are in line with the high national averages. For apprenticeships, outcomes declined sharply to well below the national average in 2011/12 on engineering, motor vehicle, construction and hairdressing frameworks and significantly so for the high proportion of learners on customer service and business administration apprenticeships. Poor management of the customer service and business apprenticeships by partners is being addressed but it is too early to measure the full impact.

- No achievement gaps of significance exist between males and females. Adult learners from Eastern European backgrounds achieve at a lower rate than other groups as a result of the high proportion of learners leaving ESOL courses mid-year. Learners from Eastern Europe do not achieve as well as learners from British backgrounds on AS and A-level courses. The performance of learners with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher when compared with other learners.
- Learners speak highly of the support they receive to develop their confidence and prepare them for their future goals. Opportunities to broaden and develop new social and employment-related skills are available for most learners to prepare them well for their next destination and include an increasing range of additional qualifications. The recent 'Man Up' activities targeted at young male learners was successful in getting learners to think about how to respect others and deal with bullying more effectively. Not all learners have opportunities to experience work as part of their course, an area for improvement which the college recognises and is taking steps to improve.
- Learners' achievements in functional skills tests in English and mathematics are improving and are now above the national average.
- Most learners progress to higher level courses or to employment. Staff recognise that many learners find advanced-level courses challenging and have reviewed recruitment arrangements on most vocational courses appropriately. The requirements for entry to most AS-level courses are not sufficiently demanding. A significant proportion of learners take up the extended range of higher education courses on offer at the college. Consequently the proportion of learners progressing to higher education is increasing.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and reflect the need to improve outcomes for learners. Too many lessons are no better than satisfactory. Less effective lessons lack pace, and teachers fail to check learners' understanding adequately before moving on to new learning.
- In a minority of lessons, although enjoyable for learners, the excessive use of activities leaves little room for learners to check and deepen their learning. In too many lessons whole group work or group tasks result in all learners progressing at the same rate, usually at that of the slowest member. Too many lessons fail to stretch the more able learners.
- In the best lessons learners benefit from well-planned and relevant activities which teachers use well to build learners' knowledge and skills. These are structured well to promote effective learning, take good account of individual needs, and provide appropriate challenge for the more able. Learners made good progress in these lessons. Attendance is good. Most learners like coming to college and enjoy their lessons.
- Apprentices receive good training in the workplace. This is planned well, carefully aligned to the needs of employers and results in good skills development.
- Only a minority of teachers are confident and capable in the use of information learning technology (ILT) and use it well to present information, show video clips and create interesting activities that engage learners. However, too many simply use it to project information.
- Much teaching is good in performing arts, hospitality and in lessons for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners benefit from high expectations, engagement, care, support and motivation from staff. Teachers know their learners well, and plan and deliver interesting and challenging work to meet individual learners' needs.
- Assessment is fair and accurate. The majority of teachers provide useful and detailed feedback to their learners, which shows them clearly how they can improve further. In work-based learning assessment is good.

- Teachers pay insufficient attention to developing learners’ skills in English and mathematics. A significant proportion of learners join the college with skills at foundation level and too few progress to, and achieve, English and mathematics’ qualifications at intermediate level. Teachers usually correct spelling and grammar in learners’ written work but too often miss opportunities in lessons to promote routinely the further development of English and mathematics.
- The majority of learning support assistants provide good support in lessons to specific learners and to the group as a whole. This is particularly effective in those lessons where teachers plan the work of learning support assistants as part of the overall lesson plan, providing structure and clarity for the learning support assistant and learners.
- The majority of learners have an individual learning plan (ILP), however, the use of these to set targets and record progress is weak. Too many targets are broad and unspecific. Teachers and learners do not routinely identify on the ILPs when a target or action is complete, what impact this has had and what further action may be required.
- The initial assessment of learners’ literacy and numeracy skills is undertaken promptly although not all teachers make sufficient use of this information in planning lessons. Staff track and monitor the progress and achievement of learners well and are able to quickly identify and support those who are at risk of falling behind.
- Information, advice and guidance are appropriate for most learners on vocational courses. However, a significant number of learners from the European Union are not prepared sufficiently well for study on A-level courses and as a result their poor English language skills impede their own learning, and on occasion, that of the whole class.
- Teachers create a positive learning environment however opportunities to promote equality and diversity positively within lessons are too often missed. As a result learners’ knowledge and understanding is no better than satisfactory. Learners demonstrate respectful behaviours throughout the college.

<p>Health, social care and early years</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>Other work based learning</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in the need to improve outcomes for learners, which are below average for college-based learners. Effective arrangements are in place for work-based learners in care settings and outcomes for these learners are good.
- In the better lessons teachers use a good variety of methods and activities to interest and motivate learners. They make good progress, developing their use of professional terminology and understanding of roles and responsibilities in their workplaces well. Teachers and assessors use their good levels of vocational knowledge, experience and qualifications to ensure learners become more effective carers. However, a significant minority of lessons are not planned well enough, the pace is too slow and teachers are less successful in ensuring the individual needs and interests of learners are met.
- Assessment is fair but feedback to learners is not consistent in giving them the help they need to improve. Feedback on practical assignments is constructive and detailed but in reviews of progress learners do not have clear enough short and long-term goals to promote achievement. In the less helpful feedback, advice on how to improve or correction of poor grammar or spelling

is weak. Although a minority of teachers and assessors use questioning techniques skilfully, too many do not challenge the more able learners sufficiently.

- The initial assessment of learners is thorough and establishes their starting points, but the outcomes from this are not always used effectively enough to plan lessons or to set individual targets. Target setting is weak. Learners are encouraged to set their own targets, but these are too broad and are not often reviewed by either themselves or their teachers. Arrangements to assess the literacy and numeracy needs of work-place learners in early-years settings and to provide them with individual learning plans are underdeveloped.
- Teachers use good learning resources on all programmes. Not all teachers on child care courses have higher level occupational qualifications. Too many staff are not confident in their own English and mathematics skills, consequently these skills are not developed routinely in lessons despite many opportunities where this could be done.
- Teachers and assessors generally provide good individual care and support for learners. Most learners show good levels of respect for tutors and each other. Attendance rates are good because learners like coming to college and value their learning and development.
- Partnerships with employers are good, particularly for work-based learners, and support learning well. A very successful and effective employer group provides local care providers with a forum through which they can meet and learn about new developments in care practice. The college has established a good range of work-placements for college-based child care learners but there are too few for learners on health and social care courses.
- Arrangements for providing learners with information, advice and guidance are generally satisfactory although learners’ understanding of the details of their programmes is too often rudimentary. The entry requirements for advanced-level courses are insufficiently robust and without a requirement for appropriate achievement in English and mathematics.
- Employers provide a good range of additional qualifications for work-based learners, such as food hygiene, first aid and infection control, which increases learners’ skills and employability well. However, the college does not offer additional qualifications for college-based learners. A few teachers and assessors promote equality and diversity well. However the promotion of learners’ awareness of equality and diversity is underdeveloped by most teachers.

<p>Hospitality and catering</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and reflect the positive outcomes for learners. Success rates have improved significantly, and are now at or above national averages for both apprenticeship and classroom-based learning. A high proportion of learners progress into employment or higher levels of study.
- Teachers and employers have high expectations of their learners and apprentices. Highly experienced staff use their expertise and knowledge of the industry effectively to ensure that learners meet professional standards in both food preparation and food service. Learners work with purpose and confidence to produce and serve food of a high standard. Employers set advanced apprentices commercially challenging and interesting projects. They are actively involved in the development and assessment of their trainees, ensuring that they work to qualification expectations and the high internal standards of their establishments.
- Learners develop good practical skills in four well-equipped real work environments, including the college’s ‘bistro’. Learners studying at higher levels extend their practical and supervisory skills well through the coaching and monitoring of their peers. College-based learners readily

volunteer to work alongside their teachers at a range of external functions that broaden their experience and build confidence and employability skills effectively.

- Teaching in practical and theory lessons is good. Teachers plan lessons well. They make good use of up-to-date information on learners to meet their needs and ensure the effective deployment of learning support assistants. In theory lessons learners actively participate in individual, paired and group activities that develop and check their learning well. In practical lessons learners benefit from very good individual coaching.
- Teachers use ILT well and continue to develop its use to support learning more effectively. A good example of this is where learners used their mobile phones to link quickly to on-line video clips to develop their bakery skills. The virtual learning environment is well populated with learning resources which learners access independently to help prepare for practical sessions.
- Support for learners is good. Staff know their learners well and college-based learners and apprentices value the high levels of support that they receive. Recruitment procedures are thorough and ensure that learners have the necessary motivation, qualifications and aptitude to succeed.
- Procedures for tracking and monitoring progress are good on both apprenticeship and college-based courses. Well attended weekly tracking workshops bring together enthusiastic staff and learners who record and evaluate the progress made in practical sessions accurately. A small team work closely together to ensure the efficient and effective assessment and coordination of apprenticeship programmes.
- Assessment practice is good. In theory lessons learners often participate in individual and group activities to compare subject knowledge at the start of the lesson to that at the end. The assessment of practical skills in college and work-based settings is well planned, accurate and flexible in meeting learners’ needs. Learners receive prompt verbal and written feedback from their teachers and assessors and know what they need to do to improve. However, the recording of learners’ own evaluations of their learning and skill development is underdeveloped.
- English and mathematics skills are not routinely developed in most sessions and not enough opportunities are taken to include these as part of the learning and measure progress in these areas. Learners’ understanding of aspects of equality and diversity is not developed sufficiently in most lessons, however learners demonstrate respectful behaviour in all learning contexts.

<p>Visual and performing arts</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. They contribute to the excellent vocational and employability skills that the learners gain and their gradually improving levels of success, which are now at the national average. Success rates for advanced-level learners on two-year programmes are below the national average due to the number of learners who leave before completion. The proportion of learners who progress to further and higher education and employment is high.
- Learners make good progress in developing their skills and interests as a result of the excellent care, support and encouragement that they receive from staff. For example, learners in an art and design lesson worked with independence and enthusiasm on highly individual projects, such as jewellery and interior design that enabled them to develop specialist knowledge very effectively.
- In a minority of lessons learners do not always make the progress of which they are capable. The use of demanding and closely monitored targets in lessons to challenge learners, particularly the more able, is underdeveloped.

- Learners work on highly challenging, interesting assignments that give them valuable work experience. They are involved in such activities as organising, promoting and performing at an under-18s club night, creating a two-day local arts festival and a two-week theatre visit to Cyprus, as well as producing performances and workshops for local schools and community groups.
- Learners are able to improve the quality of their work and attain high grades as a result of the highly detailed verbal and written feedback that teachers give them following assessment of their work. Learners assess the quality of their learning accurately and record their progress in log books and well annotated sketchbooks. In a music lesson, learners developed their peer evaluation skills well by commenting on important aspects of performance including musicality and mastery of technical skills.
- Learners’ personal and additional support needs are assessed quickly and accurately. Teachers and learning support assistants coordinate their work well to ensure that all learners are able to make good progress.
- Teachers produce visually interesting and high quality learning materials to enrich and enliven learning. Teachers, particularly those in music, use their industry knowledge and experience highly effectively to motivate and inspire learners. Technicians are used efficiently to support learners’ progress in specialist areas such as the darkroom. In a minority of lessons the use of ILT to enrich the learning experience is underdeveloped.
- Learners in the music department value their learning resources highly. Access to rehearsal and performance space by these learners replicates a professional working and performing environment well. However, the lack of access to a good range of specialist workshop facilities and regular access to a theatre for preparation and rehearsal limits the learning opportunities for art and design and performing arts learners.
- The majority of learners develop good literacy and communication skills. Teachers ensure that in most lessons learners are given opportunities to develop these skills confidently. In a minority of lessons teachers do not use sufficiently the opportunities that arise naturally to develop language skills and extend the vocabulary of learners whose first language is not English.
- Learners’ numeracy skills are developed very well. For instance, in a photography lesson learners worked out exposure times in order to achieve a particular result when processing films in the darkroom.
- Learners’ understanding of equality and diversity is developed highly effectively through working on a range of projects that explore a wide range of social and cultural themes.

<p>Learning difficulties and disabilities</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. They result in high qualification success rates, good rates of progression to higher level courses, significant development of learners’ communication and social skills, and good attendance.
- Staff have high expectations of learners. They make good use of vocational and enterprise opportunities, in excellent new accommodation, to increase learners’ autonomy in travelling, working and involvement in community activities. Learners develop high levels of skills by operating the department’s kitchen, the college shop and a recycling enterprise. They make good quality items to sell at college events and raise money for charity. These activities help develop a sense of social responsibility and prepare learners very effectively for their life after college.

- Teachers are skilled and experienced and have unusually high levels of specialist teaching qualifications. Learning in enterprise or real work settings, such as the kitchen, is particularly effective. Learners know their roles and tasks for the day. They find their equipment and get on with their job, asking for help when needed. Teachers use questions well to reinforce learning. Learners rise to the challenge of working to professional standards well.
- Classroom lessons are well structured, varied and stimulating and use practical activities that keep learners moving and focused. Learning materials are of good quality. Teachers use ILT confidently and integrate literacy and numeracy skills development well into lessons. They deploy very effective strategies to help learners think, correct themselves and recall previous learning. In a few lessons questions are not managed well enough to ensure all learners have a chance to answer. Learners are active, lively and enjoy their lessons greatly but occasionally a learner needs a quieter atmosphere. In a very few lessons, the pitch of activities is too ambitious.
- Support is good. Teachers have good knowledge of individual learners’ skills, needs and sensitivities. Effective behaviour management helps learners to manage their own behaviour. Learners have easy access to staff, managers and the work experience coordinator for skilled support outside class. Support in lessons is skilled and discreet, although occasionally learning support staff do too much for learners.
- Assessment is good. Careful initial assessment of learners takes place over six weeks to establish their starting points. Individual learning plan targets are mostly clear. Learners and staff record progress regularly, although this occasionally takes the form of recording the activities undertaken rather than the skills learnt. Verbal feedback to learners in class on their progress is frequent, positive and motivating. Lessons often contain simple graphic evaluations of particular skills undertaken by the learners themselves.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Taster days at college for potential learners help parents and carers ensure provision matches their needs. Flexible arrangements for on- or off-site initial interviews are particularly appreciated. Guidance about learners’ next steps is frequent and covered more formally during tutorials, although these are not always effective for learners with very limited speech.
- Lessons do not promote learners’ understanding of equality and diversity sufficiently well. While staff from minority ethnic backgrounds provide good role models to learners, learning materials have little representation of ethnic diversity. A few staff occasionally use a tone or choice of words more suited to much younger learners.

<p>Business</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, as reflected in the success rates that remain largely static since the last inspection and are around the national average. The majority of learners progress onto higher level courses, including some who progress from foundation level to higher education courses at the college.
- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable. In the better lessons learners make good progress and are encouraged to work independently. In these lessons teachers use their expertise effectively to engage learners by using interesting activities and tasks. The use of skilful questioning techniques by teachers ensures all learners are included actively in these lessons, which are enjoyable and stimulating.

- The less effective lessons are planned poorly and do not take into account the needs and abilities of learners effectively. For example, learners all do work of the same standard, providing insufficient challenge for the more able learners. Learners who finish early have little to do and become bored.
- The use of ILT is underdeveloped. Many teachers have an over-reliance on presenting information and use interactive media infrequently. Staff and learners do not benefit sufficiently from the virtual learning environment.
- Teachers and support staff provide good care and support for learners, maintaining regular contact to keep them on track. Learners value the caring approach that in many cases is sensitive to their particular needs. Additional support is effective in helping learners achieve their potential.
- The initial assessment of learners identifies their current skill levels accurately. Teachers monitor learners' progress regularly. In the majority of cases learners' short and longer term goals are expressed adequately, with learners also involved appropriately in setting their own targets. Individual learning plans are not used effectively to support learning.
- Learners are made aware of assessment requirements and timescales. Written feedback from teachers is supportive and constructive in most cases. However, in some instances teachers do not provide sufficient levels of written feedback on how learners can improve. In a very few instances the assessment of learners' work is inaccurate.
- Learners have appropriate opportunities to develop English and mathematics skills in lessons and through assessed work, such as numeracy skills in finance work. Many Eastern European learners on advanced-level vocational courses develop literacy skills and understanding of industry terminology effectively. However, in a few lessons they are not encouraged to develop their English language skills sufficiently and use their own language too often.
- Learners on vocational courses have a clear understanding of the higher level courses available and receive timely information on the next steps into employment or further training. They benefit from work experience, external speakers, additional qualifications and community work. However, for learners on A-level law courses information, advice and guidance are not sufficient. For example, not all learners have appropriate prior achievements and learners whose first language is not English struggle with much of the advanced and complex information associated with the subject.
- Learners come from very diverse backgrounds and nationalities, including many learners from Eastern European countries. They treat each other with respect and value each other's differences. In a few lessons, positive promotion of equality and diversity through careful selection of information and activities takes place, for example the promotion of females in senior management roles. However, in other lessons naturally occurring opportunities to develop learners' understanding further are missed too often.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The Principal sets high standards for staff and is a visible role model in demonstrating a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Whether intended to shape the culture of the college or address feedback from learners or staff, opportunities to make improvements are mostly grasped with enthusiasm. Staff engagement, communications and responsiveness to learners are now stronger. The learning environment continues to be improved. However, management actions to raise standards have not yet had sufficient impact in securing consistently good teaching and learning across the college or in addressing the low success rates of adult learners, apprentices and learners taking AS courses.
- Strategic planning and decision making focus strongly on the learners' experience and align securely with current public policy priorities. College targets are deliberately very ambitious, but

consequently improvement targets are often missed. Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the performance of courses and programme areas are thorough and well supported by real time data.

- Governors support the college well and use their time constructively, for example by spending half days in selected areas and sharing the insights gained. Managers provide governors with sufficient information to monitor learners' outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning through regular, concise and self-critical reports and the comprehensive self-assessment report. However, as they recognise, governors need to develop their capability to interrogate the information to be able to monitor these areas more rigorously.
- Underperformance is addressed through support and development and, where appropriate, capability procedures. Performance reviews are effective in setting broad targets and agreeing associated development needs, but rely too heavily on self-assessment. Too many performance reviews fail to evaluate the skills and competencies of teachers and managers rigorously for the process to be a valuable tool in improving teaching and learning.
- The staff development programme and the deployment of advanced practitioners are very responsive to teachers' development needs, particularly those identified through lesson observations. Many teachers have improved their skills in this way. Not all staff development sessions take enough account of the differences in the skills needed for different levels of study. Insufficient attention is given to supporting teachers on vocational courses to up-date their industry experience.
- The college has very clear self-assessment procedures which are increasingly inclusive and well understood by staff. Evaluation of performance strives to be honest and accurate. Self-assessment reports mostly provide a comprehensive review of the provision, but are overly descriptive. Inspectors felt that several grades were over-generous. Quality improvement planning is good at college level, but of more variable quality at departmental level. At course level, most self-assessment reports contain very limited evaluation and unambitious improvement objectives.
- The college monitors the quality of teaching and learning through graded lesson observations, increasingly supplemented by a drop-in approach across subject areas. However, the college has only recently taken steps to focus lesson observation judgements more on the quality of learning taking place and the progress made by learners. This means that grade profiles of the quality of lessons have been unreliable and, in the view of inspectors, over-generous. Observation records for this year indicate that many observers have still to make this transition. Action plans following lesson observations mostly contain helpful and significant pointers to improvement.
- Arrangements for learners to have their say about their course and the college are extensive and the principal is a very active part of the process, through, for example, the 'Buzz the Boss' initiative. The college frequently responds positively to feedback from learners. Although there is variability across curriculum areas, learners' views are generally influential in the self-assessment process.
- The broad and diverse curriculum is reviewed continually and is responsive to the needs and interests of learners. The college is particularly responsive to the training needs of established employers in an area which is not attracting much new industry. Good use is made of partnership arrangements to extend learning opportunities.
- Arrangements for the management and quality assurance of partnership provision are good. The college has sought to improve the management of its own work-based learning programmes and address the decline in apprenticeship success rates by transferring ownership to the relevant curriculum areas. Retention of apprentices has clearly improved but it is still too early to judge whether these changes have had sufficient impact on success rates.
- Arrangements for managing and promoting equality and diversity are effective. The scrutiny of gaps in achievement is thorough and improvement plans at all levels address any concerns. Most gaps have narrowed. The college provides an inclusive learning environment and celebrates the achievements of different groups of learners well. Events designed to increase

learners' tolerance and respect for individual differences have a strong impact. There remains too much variability in the quality with which teachers highlight equality and diversity themes and respond to the different abilities of individual learners in their planning of lessons.

- The college meets its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of learners. Vetting arrangements are secure and the single central record is comprehensive and reliable. Management of health and safety is meticulous. Bullying is not tolerated and reported incidents are dealt with promptly, sensitively and appropriately.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

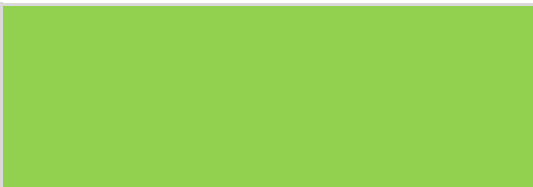
Boston College									
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
Outcomes for learners	3		3	3	3				
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3		3	3	3				
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3		3	3	3				

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Early years and playwork	3
Hospitality and catering	2
Performing arts	2
Visual arts	2
Independent living and leisure skills	2
Business	3

Provider details

Boston College	
Type of provider	General further education college
Age range of learners	14+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1,620
	Part-time: 6,516
Principal/CEO	Amanda Mosek
Date of previous inspection	October 2008
Website address	www.boston.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	370	55	380	58	693	198	0	0
Part-time	16	490	18	982	14	393	3	54
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	119	120	76	211	1	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	141							
Number of community learners	705							
Number of employability learners	189							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A1 Assessment Ltd ■ Allenby Training Ltd ■ Andrea Hackett trading as AH Training ■ Boston United Football in the Community Ltd ■ East Lindsey ITEC Ltd trading as First College ■ NDA Foundation ■ Pat Clarke Qualifications ■ Rand Training Ltd ■ Rita's Training Services 							

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- SkillsLinc Ltd
 - TLE Training.

Additional socio-economic information

Boston College is located near to the town centre of Boston in Lincolnshire. The college mainly serves the borough of Boston and the districts of South Holland and East Lindsey, though its geographical reach is wider than this. The areas are characterised by a low skills, low wage economy and, consequently, high levels of deprivation and rural poverty. The college is the third most rural in the country and, of the 326 local authorities, Boston district is the 65th most deprived area in the country. Boston has had a significant increase in skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers from Central and Eastern Europe. The proportion of White Other students at the college is increasing and is currently 20%. The college has invested heavily in its estates with a new teaching block, a refurbishment of a local sports centre to house sports, public services and performing arts students, and extensive remodelling of a former council care home to provide high quality teaching and learning accommodation for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. The college provides courses and progression routes in 14 of the 15 sector subject areas. The proportion of students gaining five GCSEs grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, in Lincolnshire is just above the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Paula Heaney HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the vice principal, curriculum and quality as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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